

AGENDA



Thursday, December 13, 2007

**Police
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 33**

Subject: Approve an ordinance authorizing the acceptance of \$91,500 in grant funds from the Greater Austin Crime Commission; and amending the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Police Department Operating Special Revenue Fund of Ordinance No. 20070910-003 to appropriate \$91,500 for the Austin Police Department Badge Replacement Program to purchase newly designed badges for Austin Police Department sworn officers.

Amount and Source of Funding: This funding was provided to the Commission by former Austin Mayor Roy Butler. The funding is being granted to the City of Austin from the Greater Austin Crime Commission on behalf of Mayor Butler to be used exclusively for the purchase of new badges for sworn personnel of the Austin Police Department.

Fiscal Note: A fiscal note is attached.

Recently, former Mayor Roy Butler made a gracious donation to the Greater Austin Crime Commission to fund this grant for the purchase of replacement badges for all sworn officers of the Austin Police Department.

The badge currently worn by Austin police officers is a fairly small, generic model. It is easily replicated and similar to badges worn by other local law enforcement agencies and security guards. The generic badge is also available for purchase by the general public through law enforcement catalogues and online websites such as eBay. The fact that the current badge is indistinguishable from badges of other entities causes public and officer safety concerns. When approaching or approached by an Austin Police Department officer, citizens should be able to readily recognize that the officer is a legitimate Austin Police Department officer. The purview of Austin police officers extends well beyond that of other local agencies. Thus, the need for a unique badge for Austin Police Department officers that facilitates immediate recognition is vital. This need increases in emergency situations and during large-crowd events.

The current badge has a random number on the face that does not correspond to the employee number of the officer. The true employee number is provided on the officer's nametag. This is quite confusing for many residents when attempting to reference or contact the officer at a later date. Not only is it important to citizens that an officer's badge number correspond with the officer's employee number, but having the proper identifier in one location on the officer's person makes the most logical sense.

The new badge will significantly reduce the ability of an individual to impersonate an Austin Police Department officer and it will enhance authentication due to uniqueness. The Police Department is confident that the new badge will also increase public safety and officer safety.